



**HOLY SEE PRESS OFFICE**

**EMBARGO**

**until 1.30pm  
(Rome time)  
of 07 February 2025**

*Traduzione di lavoro in lingua inglese*

***Ambassadors of hope:  
together against human trafficking***

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

It is with joy that I join you on the 11th International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking. This event falls on the liturgical commemoration of St Josephine Bakhita, a Sudanese woman and nun, who was a victim of trafficking as a child and has become a symbol of our commitment against this terrible phenomenon. In this jubilee year, let us also walk together, as 'pilgrims of hope', on the road against trafficking.

But how is it possible to continue to nourish hope in front of the millions of people, especially women and children, young people, migrants and refugees, trapped in this modern slavery? Where do we get new impetus to combat the trade in human organs and tissues, the sexual exploitation of children and girls, forced labour, including prostitution, drug and arms trafficking? How do we experience all this in the world and not lose hope? It is only by lifting our eyes to Christ, our hope, that we can find the strength for a renewed commitment that does not allow itself to be overcome by the dimension of problems and dramas, but in the darkness strives to light flames of light, which together can illuminate the night until the dawn breaks.

The young people around the world who are fighting against trafficking offer us an example: they tell us that we must become ambassadors of hope and act together, with tenacity and love; that we must stand by the victims and survivors.

With the help of God, we can avoid becoming accustomed to injustice and ward off the temptation to think that certain phenomena cannot be eradicated. The Spirit of the Risen Lord sustains us in promoting, with courage and effectiveness, targeted initiatives to weaken and oppose the economic and criminal mechanisms that profit from trafficking and exploitation. He teaches us first of all to listen, with closeness and compassion, to the people who have experienced trafficking, to help them get back on their feet and together with them to identify the best ways to free others and to do prevention.

Trafficking is a complex, constantly evolving phenomenon, and is fuelled by wars, conflicts, famine and the consequences of climate change. It therefore requires global responses and a common effort, at all levels, to tackle it. I therefore invite all of you, especially representatives of governments and organisations that share this commitment, to join us, animated by prayer, to promote initiatives in defence of human dignity, for the elimination of human trafficking in all its forms and for the promotion of peace in the world.

Together - trusting in the intercession of St Bakhita - we can make a great effort and create the conditions for trafficking and exploitation to be banned and for respect for fundamental human rights to prevail, in fraternal recognition of common humanity.

Sisters and brothers, I thank you for your courage and tenacity in carrying out this work, involving so many people of good will. Go forth with hope in the Lord, who walks with you! I bless you from my heart. I pray for you, and you pray for me.

Vatican, February 4, 2025

FRANCIS